

Old Maps & Gazetteers

[Video Link](#)

Old Maps

Let's talk about maps and how you might use them in your genealogy and family history publications.



Here is a list of a few of the different types of maps that you might seek when doing your genealogy research.

- Postal maps
- Agricultural maps
- Census Enumerator maps
- General historical maps
- Soil maps
- GIS maps
- Boundary maps
- Migration maps
- Land or deed maps
- Road & Bridges Work maps
- Sanborn Insurance maps
- Geographical (rivers, mountains, etc.)
- Military War maps
- Google Maps and Google Earth Maps



Gazetteers

A Gazetteer is a list of... or a dictionary of places. For genealogists, they are often used to find small unincorporated or crossroads, rivers, and junctions that are often not found on maps.

Look for Gazetteers in books or online. This example is the Gazetteer for North Carolina. Since I do a lot of research in North Carolina, it is handy on my bookshelf. Here is an affiliate link to the [North Carolina Gazetteer](#) book if you are researching in North Carolina.



Find Gazetteers for some areas on Ancestry.com or try Googling the location.

Finding Old Maps

Finding the right map for your situation may take some creativity. I suggest you look at all these links to get familiar with what each one has.

YOUR FIRST STOP

State Archives ([See previous episode about State Archives Online](#)). State

Archives should be your first place to look for old maps. They will likely have the most of any one location and the original maps for in the area you are researching.

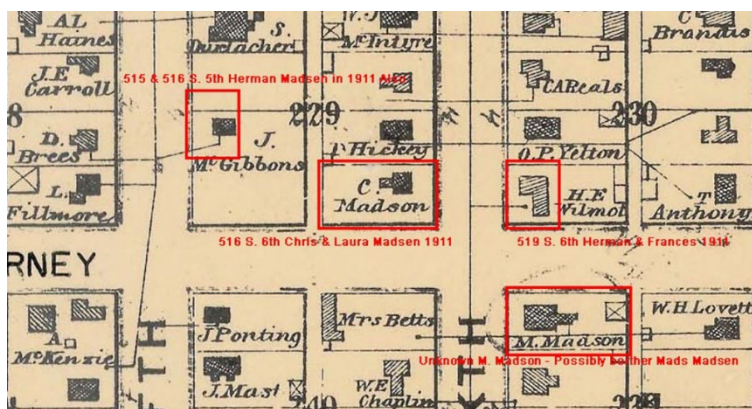


Figure 1 Wyoming State Archives

More Favorites

[Library of Congress Historical Map Archive Catalog](#)

[Maps of Interest to Genealogist at the National Archives](#)

[Railroad Maps at the National Archives](#) Some railroad maps you'll find listed as postal maps because the railroads were considered part of the postal system.

[Postal Maps at the National Archives](#) Some postal maps have the names of residences listed right on the map.

[Historical Maps USGS.gov](#)

[MapofUS.org](#) has a great animated version of border changes for each state as well as links many historical maps.

Sanborn Maps

Sanborn maps were created by the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company for the purpose of documenting and assessing properties, usually in towns, cities and townships. You likely will not find them in rural areas.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1867-1977 the Sanborn Map Company. I have found original Sanborn maps at my local library as well as at state and national archives. Most at the archives are digitized and available online.

Check **Universities** in the state you are researching.

For example, the [University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#) has a large collection of Sanborn maps for North Carolina.

[Library of Congress Sanborn Maps](#)

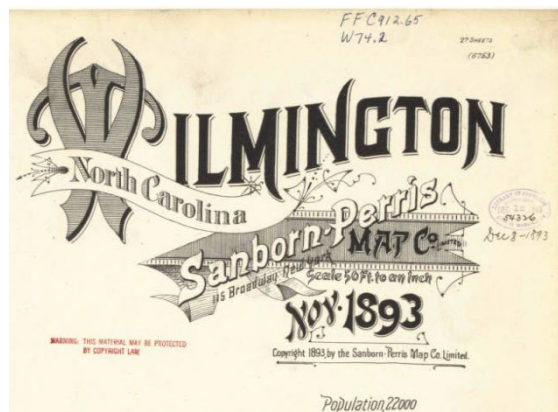


Figure 2 UNC.edu

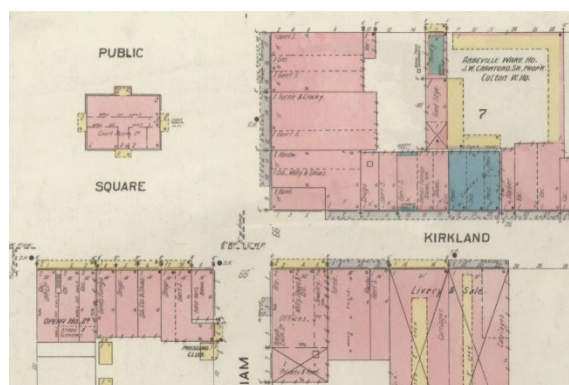


Figure 3 Sanborn Maps at LOC.gov

Other Great Websites for Maps Online

[SteveMorse.org](#) has some quick searching by postal codes, street address, and more.

[Newberry Library of Atlas of Historical County Boundaries](#)

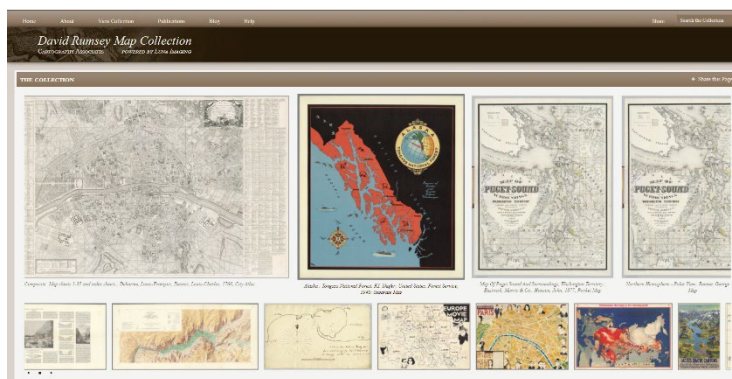
Be sure to check your local libraries, historical and genealogical societies for more maps.

The National Genealogical Society (NGS) has a searchable [database of genealogical societies](#) that are members of NGS.

Look for maps at various libraries, colleges, and universities at [WorldCat](#).

Old Maps Online

[David Rumsey Map Collection](#) has a ton of maps. Be sure to read the usage permissions before posting any maps in public locations, from this website.



[Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) has a variety of maps. Search > Card Catalog > Maps, Atlases & Gazetteers then filter by location and era in the left side column.

Census Enumeration Maps are available from 1900-1950 census, but they can be tricky to find. 1910–1950 can be found on the 156 rolls of NARA microfilm publication T1224.

The screenshot shows the 'Card Catalog' interface on Ancestry.com. The title is 'Card Catalog' with the subtitle 'Searchable listing of all record collections'. The search results are for 'Maps, Atlases & Gazetteers' and show 1-25 of 79 results. The results are sorted by 'Date Added'. The left sidebar shows filters for 'Maps, Atlases & Gazetteers' and 'USA'. The main table lists various map collections with their titles, categories, and record counts.

Title	Category	Records	Activity
Lockport Area, Illinois, U.S., Church, Cemetery, and Other Records, 1811-1995	Maps, Atlases & Gazetteers	141,422	
U.S., Enumeration District Maps and Descriptions, 1940	Maps, Atlases & Gazetteers	157,098	
U.S., Indexed Early Land Ownership and Township Plats, 1785-1898	Maps, Atlases & Gazetteers	165,796	
U.S. and World Atlases, 1822-1923	Maps, Atlases & Gazetteers	8,070	
A complete genealogical, historical, chronological and geographical atlas	Maps, Atlases & Gazetteers	27	
U.S., Historic Land Ownership and Reference Atlases, 1507-2000	Maps, Atlases & Gazetteers	53,408	
U.S., Indexed County Land Ownership Maps, 1860-1918	Maps, Atlases & Gazetteers	6,940,589	
Map of 100 villa plots at Plainfield, New Jersey	Maps, Atlases & Gazetteers	5	
U.S., Map Collection, 1513-1990	Maps, Atlases & Gazetteers	2,804	

[Ancestry has the 1940 enumeration maps.](#)

[Ancestry has the 1950 District Finder](#) Enter the address and you might find it redirects you to a map from 1950. You can then copy the link to save the map.

[FamilySearch Wiki](#) > Location > right-hand side, maps and gazetteers.

[USGS.gov](https://www.usgs.gov) for Topo maps that can be overlaid on Google Earth and in software like Deed Mapper.

[Bureau of Land Management](#) This is a great place to go for land and deed maps and records.

[U.S. Indexed County Land Ownership Maps, 1860-1918](#) on Ancestry

[LOC.gov Collections with Maps](#)

[U.S. Civil War Maps](#)

[WWII Military Situation Maps](#)

Finding Old Maps and Comparing to Census Records

If you find a map that lists ancestors names on residences or businesses. Look for a census record close to the same time, to see if you can match a map to the census. In this case (shown in the video and image below) I was able to see how the census taker walked down the street.

1885 Map of Laramie, WY - State Archives

1880 Census - Laramie, WY Ancestry.com

9	311	Norman Mathew	w	F	28
10					
11		Anna G.	w	F	44
12		Edmond	w	M	14
13		Harry	w	M	9
14		Bertie	w	M	4
15		Merrick Ray	w	M	14
16		Black Ernest	w	M	14
17		Mrs. Edith	w	F	26
18	204 107 117	Blake F. A.	w	M	62
19		Clara J.	w	F	56
20		Wesley	w	M	36
21		Harnes L.	w	F	26
22		Wentworth George	w	M	23
23		Stutts L.	w	M	28
24	303 108 118	Shulton Howard	w	F	14
25		George	w	M	18
26		Travis Velia	w	F	25